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Cordon: Police in St Leonard's Road, above and far right; The man was found lying at the foot of steps leading to the building, right

'NAKED' MAN FOUND DEAD

Man in his 40s 'may have fallen from top floor window'

REPORTERS
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The death of a man found naked outside a converted mansion house in Surbiton was not suspicious, police have said.

The man, believed to have been in his 40s, was found dead outside flats in St Leonard's Road, off Maple Road, on Monday morning. Police and paramedics were

called at about 6.25am to reports of a man found injured, but pronounced him dead at the scene just yards from St Andrew's and St Mark's Junior School.

A police spokesman said: "Officers believe they know the identity of the deceased and enquiries are under way to inform next of kin."

Several people said they believe the man may have fallen from a top floor window.

Pigeon spikes that appeared to have fallen from a window sill

on the top floor could be seen outside the main entrance to the property.

It is understood the dead man did not live in the property, and that the residents who lived in the flat where the man was believed to be staying were not at home at the time of his death.

Residents living in the block said the man was found naked, lying at the foot of steps leading up to the main entrance of the building.

One woman, who was woken

when emergency services arrived, said the man may have been wearing shorts, or could have been covered over with a towel.

His death was initially treated as unexplained, but was labelled non-suspicious just hours later.

Police declined to release the man's name as the Kingston Guardian went to press on Tuesday.

● Did you know the man? To leave a tribute, call the newsdesk on 020 8722 6313 or email jon.sharman@london.newsquest.co.uk.



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A moving story

Inside and out: The Tudor mansion in Coombe Hill Road, Kingston

REPORTER

RACHAEL BURFORD

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A Tudor mansion that was painstakingly moved brick by brick from Essex to Kingston more than 100 years ago has gone up for sale.

Cedar Court, in Coombe Hill Road, was built in 1483 on the bank of the river Colne, near Chelmsford, but in 1910 wealthy antiquarian Walter Thornton-

Smith moved the entire property to a piece of land he bought beside Coombe Hill golf course.

The 12-bedroom, nine-bathroom house has been through many incarnations over the years, serving as a residence for a wealthy merchant, a tavern and a furniture store before its move.

Mr Thornton-Smith bought the original house for £350 and then spent £30,000 and two years dismantling and re-building it. Every part of the building was

sectioned out and numbered so that it could be rebuilt exactly as it was after its 42-mile trip.

The property is advertised as "price on application", but it is certain to go for far more than the £350 spent 104 years ago.

The estate agent in charge of selling the property, Diana Wormald, said: "It is definitely the most interesting property I have ever handled in Coombe Hill and it is destined to sell to someone with a deep passion for history."

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The Treasurer's main duties include preparation and monitoring of the club's budget and financial strategy and accounts, oversight of other financial issues and making payments from information supplied by the bookkeeper or accountants.

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Scheme gets kids reading

More Kingston schoolchildren are reading and going to libraries thanks to a borough library membership scheme, writes *Allen Au-Yeung*.

More than half of the students at both Lovelace Primary School in Chessington and Burlington Infants School in New Malden signed up to Kingston library's Universal Library Membership (ULM) scheme are now borrowing books outside of school times, new figures show.

The scheme gives children who are not already members of a library the opportunity to receive a library card through their school.

Five schools are currently enrolled in the initiative – Castle Hill Primary, Lovelace Primary, Burlington Infants, Corpus Christi and Lime Tree Primary – with four more set to join next year.

Reading numbers were further bolstered by the 4,300 children who took part in the Summer Reading Challenge – where students were encouraged to read six library books over the summer holidays.

Councillor David Glasspool, lead member for arts, leisure and heritage said: "We know there is a strong link between children using public libraries and good reading skills."

"These results, combined with the best ever year for the Summer Reading Challenge, mean many more children and their families are using libraries, borrowing books and discovering the pleasures of reading."



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Town centre stick fighters sent to jail

CHIEF REPORTER

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Two men who brought traffic to a standstill as they lashed out with sticks and belts in Kingston town centre during a street fight have been jailed.

Stepbrothers Craig Jones, 25, and Scott Mills-Jones, 27, were found guilty of affray at Kingston Crown Court last week.

Their sister Natalia Connelly, 35, and friend Jason Mayo, 29, were also found guilty of affray.

A fifth defendant, Jermon Crooks, 23, from Thornton Heath, was cleared of the same charge.

During the trial it was alleged the fight, at about 5.30pm on April 15 this year, was sparked when Mr Crooks made a "sexual comment" towards Natalia Connelly.

The ensuing fight started outside the Kings Tun pub in Clarence Street, spilling into the one-way system and down towards Wheatfield Way.

Ahead of his sentencing, Jones' defence council Greg Foxsmith encouraged his client to stop smiling and laughing.

Jones then listened to his mitigation stoney-faced.

Mr Foxsmith said: "He grew up with his mum and never knew his father.

"He has insisted that he has reflected since he has been in custody.

"He has done every course in prison - there are no further courses he can do. There is nothing else new for him save for one course."

He added Jones only got involved because of a "misguided" support for others in his group and despite previous convictions for petty offences, hoped to rehabilitate.

Joao Arsenio, defending Mills-Jones, also said a lack of a



CCTV: The fight involved sticks and belts

father figure had contributed to his client's lifestyle.

He said: "He tells me this has been a gap in his life."

But Mr Arsenio added having recently got back in touch with his father, Mills-Jones had been offered labouring work upon his release from prison.

The court also heard that Mills-Jones, who struggled with drink and drug problems, had attained GCSEs despite having learning difficulties and

one-to-one support at school.

Mr Arsenio said: "That was a significant effort given the circumstances."

But judge Judith Coello sentenced the brothers, both of Chelsea Close, Hampton Hill, to 15 months in prison on Friday.

Mayo, of Fielding Avenue, Twickenham, will be sentenced on January 15.

Connelly, who lives in East Road, Kingston, will be sentenced at a later date.

GPs open winter weekends

GPs will open their doors at weekends this winter to boost urgent care availability.

The clinics will supplement the out-of-hours GP service at Kingston Hospital until the end of

March next year.

To book an appointment, call 020 3021 5404 or call the NHS 111 helpline.

Clinics will run from 10am to noon, and from 5pm to 7pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

Clinic hours in Chessington may be shorter.

Doctors will not have access to patients' medical records and said residents should continue to visit their regular GP for long-term ailments.

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Brothel charge

A New Malden woman will appear in court next week charged with running three brothels in the borough.

Denise Oliver, 45, of Springfield Place, New Malden, is charged with keeping a brothel in Burlington Road, New Malden, and two in St James Road, Surbiton.

Miss Oliver will appear at Kingston Crown Court on December 23.

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Vroom with a view: The old Cooper garage
KT89024

On track for a sale

A piece of Formula 1 racing history is for sale in Surbiton.

The old Cooper garage, in Hollyfield Road, has been put on the market through estate agents Knight Frank.

The vacant garage, which was used by the Metropolitan Police after the world-beating Cooper team left the area, is currently used as storage and workshop space with ancillary offices.

Formula 1 legend Sir Jack Brabham, who died this year, won two world titles with Cooper in 1959 and 1960.

THE WRONG TROUSERS: Father Christmas left embarrassed after wardrobe malfunction

Santa red-faced after bags drop

REPORTER

TANVEER MANN

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A slimmed-down Santa suffered a dreaded wardrobe malfunction last week – when his trousers fell down in front of 30 people.

Fergus Kent, from St Albans Road, Kingston, had to put on a brave face in front of mums and kids, after his Santa Claus outfit unravelled and fell to the floor.

The 57-year-old has been donning the famous costume at the St Andrews Church playgroup in Ham for the past five years.

Explaining this year's embarrassing escapade, he said: "They start playing the music, I've got the bag of toys on my shoulder saying 'Ho, ho, ho'."

"The next thing you know, I look up and realise everyone's laughing, and my wife is running to me, pulling my trousers up."

Fortunately for Mr Kent, he had his trousers on underneath his costume.

"That would've been even more embarrassing if I didn't have my trousers. All the mums were already bawling about. They couldn't stop laughing."

Mr Kent has been a registered childminder for nearly 20 years and previously used to run a fruit stall at Kingston Market Place.

Over the past year, he has become more health conscious, and taken up running to keep himself slim.

He joked: "I'm probably one of the skinniest Santas out there."

"The kids didn't even realise, it was the mums and other childminders that couldn't stop laughing."

He cannot give up his Santa outfit just yet, as he will be donning the costume at Latchmere School again this week.

He said: "I'm going to make sure I have a pair of braces on and doubly secure it."



Malfunction: Fergus Kent fixes his trousers
Deadlinepix
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Cadet anger over jet sale

REPORTER

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The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is soon to announce the sale of the Harrier jump jet kept at the Surbiton air cadet headquarters.

The iconic Harrier GR3, which arrived back in the borough in 2005 and is believed to have seen service in the Falklands War, was put up for sale last month.

Officials said in July the jet had to be removed from its home in 1034 Squadron's Tolworth headquarters due to health and safety fears over its "rapidly deteriorating condition".

But cadets past and present reacted with anger and sadness to the decision – with one calling the move "a crime" because of the jet's sentimental and



Grounded: The Harrier jump jet being winched into position, and, right, cadet Usama Mahmood, 14, gets in the cockpit

Deadlinepix KT1203



training value to the squadron.

Former cadet James Manning said: "It's good to hear that it's up for sale and not up for scrap [but] it's still possible, I'm guessing.

"It's a shame that it has to be going – it's history. I will be there whenever it gets transported away."

A tender notice sent out by the MoD described the condition of the jet.

It said: "The airframe is old and shows some signs of weather-induced wear.

"Although the structure of the aircraft doesn't present an immediate health and safety hazard, the full

structural integrity of the airframe is not known. The engine may contain residual radioactive materials."

The ministry set a reserve price on the sale, the document shows, and tenderers were asked to demonstrate how they would transport, dismantle or remove the aircraft.

The Kingston Guardian understands several interested parties viewed the jet

at a session on Monday, November 24. Its buyer, and how much they have paid for the Harrier, remains unknown.

A ministry spokeswoman said: "The Surbiton Harrier is still being dealt with by the Defence Disposal Services Authority and we'll be notified in due course once the Harrier has formally been transferred to a new owner."

Refuge is offered to Syrian families

Council leader Kevin Davis said he has stepped up a campaign to house 50 Syrian refugees in the borough by lobbying fellow London council leaders to do the same.

The campaign, led by Citizens UK, hopes to persuade Government to raise its cap on refugee numbers to 1,500 – though Councilor Davis said just 90 have been admitted to the UK so far.

Tesco purchase

Kingston Council will not move to use compulsory purchase powers to take control of the Tolworth Tesco site.

Council officers said compulsory purchase would be "inappropriate" because the authority had no scheme of its own, and there was a "real possibility" of working with Tesco on housing-only plans.

New retail space

The redevelopment of a Surbiton petrol station site could include 4,000sq ft of retail space alongside new homes.

Planners Ropleys has put out a call for interest in the potential space in Brighton Road in a consultation with council planning officers.

Flexi-chemist

A new Boots pharmacy has opened at Kingston Hospital that bosses hope will give more flexibility to patients.

The pharmacy is part of changes to facilities that include redesigned waiting areas, refurbished lifts and a new cafe.

Next week councillors will also decide whether to give the green light to an expanded car park at the hospital.

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Vibe **NARNIA AT THE ROSE – PAGE 15**

Teen jailed for life for killing student

REPORTERS

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A teenager has been sentenced to life in prison for the murder of Kingston College student Jamil Palmer.

Mohammed Barre, 17, from Hounslow, was found guilty of the 18-year-old business student's murder on Wednesday, following a six-week trial at the Old Bailey.

Barre stabbed Mr Palmer during a pre-arranged fight in Crane Park, Whitton, on May 6 this year.

He will serve at least 17 years in jail before being considered for parole.

Four other teenagers, also on trial for murdering the former Richmond College and Kingston College student, were found not guilty.

The 17-year-old, with

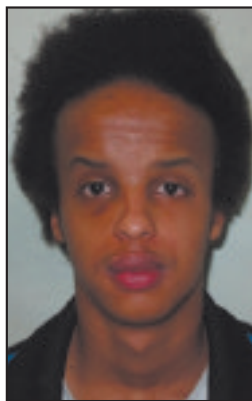
whom Mr Palmer had a long-running feud, inflicted the fatal blow to the chest during a "pre-arranged fight" in broad daylight at Crane Park, the court heard.

Passing sentence, Judge Richard Hone QC described Barre as a "troubled and turbulent young man".

He said: "By your actions you have, in effect, passed a life sentence on to all members of the victim's family. The pain and devastation caused to innocent people is beyond description."

The judge reflected on how an earlier fight that day between Barre, of Byron Avenue in Hounslow, and Mr Palmer in Browells Lane, Feltham, contributed to the murder.

He said: "It was quite apparent to me in evidence that the fatal events of May 6 were led by you and you



Convicted: Mohammed Barre

wanted to show your associates, and those of Jamil Palmer, that you were a force to be reckoned with.

"In those primeval few

seconds of fury and anger, there was no real difference between the intention to seriously injure and the intention to kill.

"I do find a serious degree of pre-meditation between Browells Lane and Crane Park."

The teenager was found guilty of possessing a blade while on bail in July 2012, as well as previous convictions including theft and robbery.

Barre showed no emotion throughout the sentencing.

Kishon Zelaya, 18, from Reading, a 15-year-old boy and two 16-year-old boys were found not guilty of murder.

Detective Chief Inspector Noel McHugh, of the homicide and major crime command in Putney, said: "What started as a petty squabble between two teenagers ended with Jamil paying the

ultimate price of losing his life.

"Jamil never stood a chance against his attacker who was armed with a knife.

"Anyone who carries a knife should be the aware of the potentially fatal consequences of their actions."

The trial lasted almost six weeks and the jury, made up of seven men and five women, reached its verdict in less than 24 hours.

Kingston College principal Peter Mayhew-Smith said: "We all remember Jamil very fondly because he was a hugely popular young man in the college and somebody that everybody had affection for.

"Him not being here is unbearably regretful.

"Our students were very upset at the time and remain shocked by it. I don't think any of us will forget. It is a sorry story and we cannot feel anything other than deepest sorrow for all those

affected and involved."

Mr Palmer joined Kingston College in September 2013 and was studying for a level 3 Btec diploma in business studies.

He hoped to go to university after completing his course in 2015.

Killed: Jamil Palmer



Tributes: Crane Park where Jamil Palmer was stabbed to death

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FAMILY'S ANGUISH

Jamil Palmer's mother Ash Sayani described her family's anguish over witnesses who failed to help police.

She said: "It has become apparent there were many people present when Jamil was murdered. A lot of these individuals were Jamil's friends.

"Only one or two individuals remained to try to help Jamil as he lay dying.

"We have been further distressed, if that were possible, at the blanket refusal of virtually all individuals who witnessed what happened to come forward and tell police.

"They hide behind what appears to be some sort of misguided loyalty, in some cases, to the very people they consider their enemies."

She added her family would focus on the "happy, friendly, funny boy" they have lost.

She said: "While we are devastated by the loss of Jamil we will not focus on the pain they have caused.

"We will instead concentrate on the wonderful person Jamil was and remind ourselves of his smile, the happy times.

"He was loved by many and is sorely missed."



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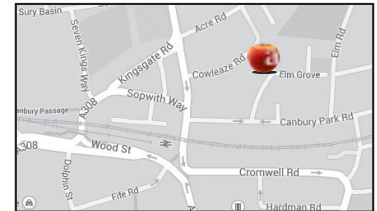
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ONLINE OPINION

Comment on stories at kingstonguardian.co.uk

Mystery death of naked man found on steps of flats

God bless... such sad news to read in the morning :(xx
CHESSINGTONMAN

Centre redevelopment 'would only take 18 months'

Here we go again.

IMIGRANTE

Nando's opens new restaurant in New Malden

Another chain restaurant, although at the healthier end of the spectrum. Perhaps give as much advertising space to new independent outlets, where more of the money actually stays in the community.

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Secrecy hangs over homes development

Thank you for highlighting this huge redevelopment in Coombe Road, next to New Malden station (Residents "left in the dark" on home plans, December 11).

From attending the exhibition by the developer, Mar City, I understand that 105 units are planned, but only 43 parking spaces, creating further pressure on the on-street parking in Alric Avenue.

Part of the proposed development is a 12-storey tower, which will be visually intrusive and is likely to add to the wind tunnel effect created by the two existing tower blocks.

Coombe Road would benefit from some development and we do need to address the housing shortage in Kingston, but I am very concerned at the secrecy surrounding this proposal, which I was told has been

discussed with the council for two to three months.

Mar City Homes claims it leafleted residents, but we did not receive one, nor did neighbours we spoke to in Alric Avenue.

And why have the three Conservative councillors for Beverley been silent?

This level of secrecy rivals the shroud of mystery, which descended on the Cocks Crescent development in the summer, and shows contempt for Beverley residents.

DR LIZ MEERABEAU
 New Malden

● Inspired by your story (Residents "left in the dark" on home plans, December 11), I visited the exhibition at the Malden Centre of the proposed redevelopment in Coombe Road.

As both the members of

Parliament for Kingston have a good reputation for conservation, I asked those in charge whether the scheme is in the Richmond Park or the Kingston and Surbiton constituency.

They looked vague.

My mind went back a decade and a half to the redevelopment of the Hampton Wick gasworks site by Galliford Try. All the developer's literature described the site as in Teddington.

When, at the inquiry, it was pointed out the site was in Hampton Wick, developers looked confused.

It would be a good idea if, before bulldozing their way into a neighbourhood, these developers (who like to talk about "sensitivity to the community") checked where they are.

IAIN INNES BURGESS
 Hampton Wick

Student digs congestion

A second planning application for a 310-student bedspace development in Kingston Road, New Malden, the demolition of the Wellington pub and two office blocks is due for decision by Kingston Council.

It is council policy that new developments should not contribute to parking stress or congestion.

If Kingston University contract to this accommodation, it is proposed the inter-site shuttle bus is extended. There is no provision for turning within the site.

Buses would travel away from the campuses to turn at the Fountain roundabout.

An unnecessary extra mile would be added to every trip.

Buses would operate three times per hour between 8am and 6pm, five days a week, over a 36-week academic year. Detrimental to local transport network sustainability, surely?

Kingston Council bided successfully to fund cycling improvements in the borough. A segregated cycle lane with raised kerb is planned for Kingston Road.

How would this work with the shuttle bus lay-by? Where are loading facilities for students at the start and end of terms? Students to sign tenancy agreements to be car-free – how would this be enforced?

A petition plus comments and recommendations from local Maldens & Coombe councillors for the first application made it clear that traffic and highways issues should have been included in refusal reasons.

Yet only the need for a legal agreement was included and apparently it now presents a risk to the council to refuse on these grounds.

Councillors – travel plans go unmonitored and unenforced.

This second application now actually includes the shuttle bus route. Will you dare to uphold policy?

The pub and office buildings lie within St John's estate – an area with significant redevelopment potential.

Vacant plots plus lease expiry offer the opportunity to re-organise the area as a whole.

Councillors – to avoid piecemeal development – will you ensure the area's brief is updated urgently?

LYNNE FINNERTY
 New Malden



Jenny Tarbutt from Kingston Camera Club spotted this double rainbow over the Thames. To see your photo featured in Borough View, email it with details of where you took it to jon.sharman@london.newsquest.co.uk.

TWEETS of the WEEK



@eleeeeyeen:
 Tolworth is the coldest place ever, if you know then you know.

@surboman:
 Bloke on the train dressed as a shepherd with a baby lamb! Brilliant #xmas #surbiton.

@LucyH_J:
 One of those mornings where you suddenly realise you forgot to put on a bra.

@ShanLovegood_x:
 We should get rid of Chessington and replace it with a wizarding world of Harry Potter.

Will thief have decency to return stolen purse?

The woman who stole an elderly lady's purse from her bag in Poundland, New Malden, on Monday afternoon, December 8, should be aware that the £50 cash in the purse was not hers, but money given to her by others to pay towards a Christmas

party. She will now have to replace it.

If this person has any shred of decency left, she should return this money, along with the lady's bank cards and other personal cards and photos.

The name and address of this

elderly lady is in the purse – she could simply put it through the letterbox.

Let us see if this thief has enough conscience to want to redeem herself.

COUNCILLOR MARY CLARK
 Old Malden ward

Mayor should set stamp duty thresholds

The decision by the Chancellor to reform the thresholds for stamp duty is welcome news for hard-pressed residents trying to get on the property ladder or who are investing in a new home in Kingston.

Under the plans brought forward by the Government, residents will either pay nothing or

see their tax obligation drop by as much as £4,500 on a sale.

That said, I believe that an even better deal for Kingston would be if the Mayor of London took control of administering and setting the stamp duty thresholds for London.

Under such a move there is the potential to see even further

savings for homebuyers and will help those who are struggling to own a home in the most expensive property market in the country.

TONY ARBOUR
 Conservative
 London Assembly
 Member for Kingston

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HITCHCOCK THRILLER: The Green Theatre Company is inviting young actors to audition for the chance to play a role in a 1929 stage thriller next year. Rope by Patrick Hamilton, more popularly known for its film adaptation by Alfred Hitchcock in 1948, will play at the Cornerhouse in February next year. But before that, budding

actors aged between 14 and 25 are invited to audition for one of eight parts in the production. The play follows two Oxford undergraduates who murder a fellow student for adventure, danger, and the fun of it. They hide the body in a chest and invite a small circle

Vibe SHORTS

of the victim's friends and family to a party, the chest acting as the

buffet's centrepiece – but one of their guests becomes suspicious.

● **Rope auditions; the Cornerhouse, 116 Douglas Road, Surbiton; January 8, 7.30pm; for more information visit greentheatre.com.**

CAROL CONCERT: The Thames Youth Choir is performing a concert full of favourite festive carols this weekend. St Andrews Church in Surbiton is hosting the Thames Youth concert, which will include performances of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite, and Anderson's Sleigh Ride as

well as a selection of audience carols.

● **Thames Youth Choir; St Andrew's Church, St Andrew's Road, Surbiton; December 20, 6.45pm; email info@thamesconcerts.com for more information.**

DANCE CLASS: Everything's Jumpin' dance club is trying to get Kingston swing dancing in time for new year. The club teaches everyone from teenagers to grandparents how to swing dance.

● **Everything's Jumpin',**

Kingston Working Men's Club, Old London Road, Kingston; Monday December 22 and Monday, December 29, 7.30pm; £7 per session or £9 for two; call 07774 810404.

CHRISTMAS COMEDY: The appropriately named Jarred Christmas is headlining the Crack Comedy show. The Kiwi comic is joined by Barry Castagnola and Steve N Allen.

● **Crack Comedy, Grey Horse, Richmond Road, Kingston; December 19, 8.30pm; £7.50; visit crackcomedy.com.**

Vibe

Record-breaking ticket sales, five star reviews and a cast of young performers cutting their acting teeth in front of a full house every night.

Christmas has truly arrived at the Rose Theatre, as its production of CS Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* surpasses all expectations.

And the feel-good factor is apparent not just among audiences, who have been thrilled by the Rose stage's spectacular transformation into Narnia, but among the cast members as well.

Katy Secombe and Daniel Goode, who play Mr and Mrs Beaver, are among the adult actors starring alongside a rotating cast of 67 children aged 12-18 from the Rose Youth Theatre.

Secombe says: "Rehearsals were really fun. We had some rehearsals at the Ravens Ait, a small island on the Thames, and had to get a boat to take us across, not how we usually arrive to rehearse."

Goode adds: "We have a lovely cast of children and they are a joy to work with."

"We ended up being parental figures for the Pevensies, as we play their parents before they get evacuated, and then have to lead the family through Narnia in the magical world."

The pair seem to be having as much fun off stage as on, and both claim their role was their favourite in the show.

Both are devoted Narnia fans with Goode, 43, saying he has read the book every year since it was read to him in school. And it being Christmas, the topic of food – and more specifically the White Witch's infamous Turkish Delight – is raised.

"We had Turkish Delight on the first night," says Secombe, 42. "The play and that

treat really made it feel like Christmas."

Both have worked at the Rose Theatre previously and agree the size of the venue lends itself perfectly to the grandeur of Narnia.

Secombe says: "The moment when the children step through the wardrobe and experience the Christmassy wood for the first time really encapsulates the awe we as the cast feel on the amazing set."

"The play epitomises Christmas," adds Goode, "It is a story of the strength of one family unit facing the world. It is a story of loss, grief, hope and courage and we hope that as many people can come along to enjoy the production."

The moment the children step through the wardrobe really encapsulates the awe we on the cast feel on the amazing set

Katy Secombe and Daniel Goode tell Rebekah Pemberton about the joys of starring in this year's big Christmas show at the Rose – *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

● **Rose Theatre; High Street, Kingston; until January 4; £10 - £27; visit rosetheatrekingston.org or call 020 8174 0090**

CHRISTMAS SMACKER

RUTH LEVITT

Instrumental in providing the coal for railway tracks in Kingston, the Kensett Family's remarkable contribution to the local community in the 18th and 19th centuries is often forgotten.

Part of a long generation of British and American Kensetts, John Robert Kensett and his dispersed family were instrumental in shaping British society.

Over the 18th and 19th centuries, the family worked as market gardeners, drapers, dry goods merchants, food canners, furniture makers, engravers, schoolmasters, coal merchants and legal clerks.

The newly published e-book Kensett, by author Ruth Levitt, details the contribution made by these artisans in Kingston and other areas.

Levitt says: "I discovered John Frederick Kensett (son of John Robert Kensett) when I was doing my PhD. I began to research the rest of family and realised that they were a fascinating group of artisans."

In the book, the author traces the rise of the train services from London to Kingston and Hampton Court around the 1800s.

The Kensett family were significant at this period of time as artisans who

provided the essential basic services for coal.

Levitt adds: "The book was a way of weaving history with the livelihoods of interesting artisans. I hope it brings to life to readers how ordinary every day people lived."

"I completed the book about a year ago after researching for two years. So I'm delighted to have it out there now."

● **Kensett: Artisans in Britain and America in the 18th and 19th centuries by Ruth Levitt; published by King's Research Portal, available as an e-book at bit.ly/1x19XOV.**

RIGHT ON TRACK

FOR MORE ON THESE AND OTHER STORIES VISIT kingstonguardian.co.uk/vibe

Taking Christmas as his inspiration, **GEORGE ODLING** gets in the kitchen for some festive baking

GINGERBREAD SANTAS

The closest I have ever come to actually doing any festive cooking was on Christmas Eve 2011, when I lobbed 12 pigs-in-blankets under the grill and devoured them in front of the television after stumbling home from the pub, leading to a slightly awkward start to Christmas Day.

But how hard could baking gingerbread be? The little girl in the Waitrose advert seemed to find it easy enough.

Panic first set in while measuring out my ingredients. I eased a chunk of butter big enough to sink a cruise liner into the weighing scales, and the dial told me I still needed more.

I have eaten more than my fair share of baked goods, but it had never occurred to me what an enormous amount of butter and sugar went into these treats. My squad of gingerbread men needed half a tin of golden syrup. Goodness only knows how Mary Berry has kept her figure.



My first real blunder was inadvertently inhaling some powdered ginger as I was pouring it, which made me sneeze so violently the tablespoon erupted all over

the kitchen.

There were no further mishaps until the dough was chilled and ready to be rolled out. I soon found out the hard way that covering everything

in flour is

necessary to stop the dough sticking to the rolling pin and ruining everything.

Using some shape-cutters, I cut the dough into some Christmas trees, elves and a Santa Claus, as well as a few designs of my own.

Everything swelled up more than I anticipated in the oven, meaning that my elves looked a bit on the portly side when they came out, but apart from that and my gingerbread penguin suffering a decapitation, I was quite pleased with how my slightly singed merry men turned out.

If you are half as incompetent in the kitchen as I am, it may be a better idea to bake with someone else, or let the experts take control.

Luckily London and Surrey boast some of the UK's best bakeries.

The Cavan Bakery, which has six stores in Hampton, Hampton Hill and Teddington, celebrates its 85th year in 2014, and has been selling its signature mince pies since 1929.

A gingerbread Rudolph the

Gingerbread men recipe

Ingredients

350g/12oz plain flour, plus extra for rolling out
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
2 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground cinnamon
125g/4½oz butter
175g/6oz light soft brown sugar
1 free-range egg
4 tbsp golden syrup

Method:

Whisk all the ingredients until they become like breadcrumbs, roll out and cut out Christmassy shapes. Place in the oven for 10 minutes at about 180C and enjoy.

WARM-ING UP:

To get baking this season with all the family why not get in touch with children's cooking club Sassy Stirrers for a fun workshop? **Sassy Stirrers; visit sassystirrers.com.**

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Home comforts come at a price

Home owners in the south east spend an average of £4,673 to make their house feel like a home.

Installing a new kitchen, upgrading the bathroom, or altering the layout were improvements undertaken by almost half 41.45 per cent of new buyers in the process of making a home their own according to a new survey by housebuilder Barratt Homes.

With these stamps of personalisation often requiring building, decoration or settling in time, 16 per cent only felt at home after 50 days, while a further 15 per cent took over three months to feel at home after moving in.

Decorating to personal tastes also plays a big part in helping people settle in, with the lounge being the priority room to personalise (45 per cent) followed by the bedroom (21 per cent).

This all comes at a cost with 13 per cent of recent home owners spending over £10,000 to turn the property into somewhere they

can comfortably call their home.

Kate Fox, Social Issues Research Centre, said: "Making a property feel like a home is really important to establish an emotional connection with your house or flat, and it's a shame to see that this is an expensive and timely process for many recent home owners – making what should be an exciting and special time much more stressful.

"Prospective buyers should ensure they have considered this aspect before choosing the type of property they want to move into."

HOW TO FAST-TRACK MAKING A HOUSE A HOME

1) Adorn the walls with personal belongings that mean something significant – it's important to have old memories in new surroundings

2) Establish family rituals e.g. Saturday night film night complete with popcorn and treats

3) Consider a new build home, the clean blank canvas can fast-track making it feel like home and eliminate expensive DIY or home improvement jobs

4) Spend as much time as possible in your home, become accustomed to its quirks, sounds, smells and how it feels

5) Invite friends and family over – bring fun and familiar people into your new surroundings.

MOVING IN MILESTONES

Key moments that help make a house feel like a home:

1) Putting up photos (35 per cent)

2) When the house feels lived in by the whole family (20 per cent)

3) Familiar smells (18 per cent)

4) When a letter arrives at the new address on (11 per cent)



Keeping up with the Jones's

American fridge freezers, self-cleaning ovens and wood burning stoves are among the items homeowners most aspire to own according to new research which also reveals that when consumers do own much hyped products they don't necessarily know how to use them.

The research, commissioned by The Stove Industry Alliance, found that while eight in 10 of us dream of buying at least one luxury household item like a robot vacuum cleaner or 3D printer, a fifth who already own one or more of these items admit to either not using them or using them infrequently because they're not sure how to

make them work.

We're guilty too of keeping up with the Jones's. The study also shows that a third of us own at least one item we don't need or bought because of hype or because a friend or family member had one. Yet despite owning these items, less than half of us bother to research how to use products before making the purchase.

The research also shows that we're quick to give up on how to use items with a third trying to get something to work for less than an hour.

When it comes to seeking help we're more likely to go online than speak to a spouse or family member.

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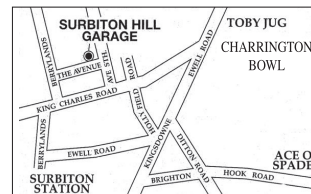
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Casuals boss Matt Howard has vowed to up his workload this Christmas ahead of key festive fixtures.

Casuals had a break from league action at the weekend, but Howard – whose team have won once in their

past seven games – was not taking it easy.

"We will ensure we are prepared for our busy Christmas schedule where we face the sides at the bottom of the table," he said last week.



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Making a mark: Kingston & Polytechnic Harrier Phoebe Law made an encouraging international debut on Sunday

Tasting Britain's European success

Kingston & Polytechnic Harriers' Phoebe Law tasted success on her international cross country debut on Sunday, writes Stuart Amos.

The 17-year-old was part of the Great Britain junior women's squad that claimed team gold at the European Cross Country Championships in Bulgaria.

Jessica Judd [14:18] led Team GB's points scoring quartet home as she finished second – five seconds behind champion Emine Tuna – with team-mates Lydia Turner [14:25] third, Amy Griffiths [14:38] fifth and Rebecca Straw [14:48] eighth.

Law was the team's fifth person home clocking 15 minutes three seconds to finish 14th in Samokov as the British team won ahead of France and Germany.

Law's coach Richard Holt said: "It was a fantastic achievement. Pheobe had a really good run.

"She may not be as quick as some of the front runners but she is very strong with great endurance. It means she works her way through the field during the race and so unfortunately she was not on television very much."

He added: "She has only been running for about two-and-a-half years, but she is incredibly focused and I cannot see her stopping her athletics any time soon."

FACE LIFT: Williams rings changes to help inspire turnaround

Change was necessary

**SPORTS EDITOR
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Boss Tommy Williams has rung the changes at Kingsmeadow and Kingstonian skipper Alan Inns has admitted it was about time.

Defender Matt Drage and striker Nathaniel Pinney both left the club after last week's 2-2 Ryman Premier League draw with Leatherhead.

Williams acted swiftly to replace them with the capture of 21-year-old former Cardiff City and AFC Wimbledon striker Jesse Darko and Havant & Waterlooville midfielder Alec Przespolewski – who has signed on a month long loan.

"Jesse has work commitments, so we don't know how much we'll see of him, but he wants to get back into the professional game," said the manager.

"Between the two of us we can work something out. I was pleased with his debut. He works his socks off and has a great attitude.

"Alec is a goalscoring midfielder. We have been looking at getting goals from other areas on the pitch and, hopefully, he can give us that."

Williams also added Millwall U21s left back Dylan Casey on loan for a month



Moving on: Defender Matt Drage's Ks career reached the end of the road last week. He has since joined former boss Alan Dowson at Hampton & Richmond Borough, for whom he made his debut at the weekend

last week, but neither he or Darko could break the deadlock in Saturday's 0-0 draw at AFC Hornchurch that leaves Ks without a league win since November 10.

Ks have had a difficult first half of the campaign, which sees them well off the pace in the play-off race.

And Inns, a Ryman Premier League winner with

Hampton & Richmond Borough, is keen to see the changes take immediate effect in the league.

"We have been consistent in our inconsistency this season," he said.

"It is hard to replace a striker partnership like Ryan Moss and Andre McCollin and the managers are desperate to do that."

"Jesse Darko has come in and he looked promising the other night.

"We've got problems at both ends really and the defeats we have had have been pretty boring for the fans as well.

"We need a confidence boosting couple of wins and hope fully we can kick on.

"We need a winning mentality. I've been at clubs where a winning mentality just breeds success.

"The manager has questioned whether a few people are playing for the team's benefit or for themselves. There have been changes."

Ks have the fourth worst home record in the division, but are the joint fourth best team on the road.

And Inns believes that gives home fans a false impression of what the side is capable of.

"In non-League football it is vital you keep the few fans you have coming to home games by entertaining them," he added.

"Things look worse because more people see the home games. Flip our home and away form around and it would be a different story.

"We know we need to get the place buzzing. It is something we talk about at training all the time.

"If we get on a good roll things can change very quickly in this league. We have seen that before."



Winner: Ks coach Stef Loucaides and Sir Trevor Brooking

Ks coach gets high honours

Kingstonian Women's U18s head coach Stef Loucaides got a shock last week when he was named female game coach of the year by the Football Association.

Loucaides collected his award from Sir Trevor Brooking and the FA's head of grassroots coaching Les Howie at St George's Park in Burton-upon-Trent last Thursday.

The awards were organised by The FA Licensed Coaches Club, which raises standards across the game by ensuring coaches keep their training up to date.

"It was a shock, but is of course a great honour. I will do everything I can to improve the women's game in Kingston and Surrey," said Loucaides.

DROPPING OFF: KCS Old Boys fell 13 points off the London Division Two South West title race pace with a 47-15 defeat at league leaders Tottenham on Saturday. They finish 2014 with the visit of London Corinthian on Saturday. Old Tiffinians lost 41-17 at home to London Exiles to slip nine points adrift of London Division Three South West leaders Eastleigh and Kingston eased Surrey Division One relegation fears with a narrow 19-18 win at fellow strugglers Old Wellingtonians.

JO'S THE TOP GIRL: Joanna Rodriguez Woking AC was the fastest woman at the Bushy Park parkrun, clocking 18 minutes 54 seconds. While the first male athlete through the tape remains unknown, Stragglers' Paul Lowe took second place by clocking 16:11, just six seconds ahead of third-placed Andrius Jaksevicus.

TOUGH FIVES: Surbiton Hockey Club men have struggled in the opening exchanges of the Hockey 5s Indoor Championship. After four games, Surbiton have one win, 8-5 over Team Bath Buccaneers, and sit seventh in the nine-team Premier Division Table. The competition, led by reigning champions East Grinstead, resumes after Christmas.

Darcie to follow in footsteps of a ski star

Kingston's queen of the snow Darcie Mead has started her long journey to the 2018 Winter Olympics, writes Tim Ashton.

The 18-year-old alpine skier has endured a tough start to this season's action following a double injury blow, but the former Surbiton High School pupil is close to full fitness.

It means she can turn her attention to targeting a place on the slopes in PyeongChang, China, and after experiencing life on the junior stage, the teenager is desperate to get her place.

Mead missed out on a place in the British team at the Sochi Games earlier this year, she believes because of her age at the time, and so had to watch fellow Surbiton High School alumna and skier Chemmy Alcott on television, rather than as a team-mate.

She said: "I've had a rocky season with injuries and I was gutted to miss out



Snow queen: Ex-Surbiton High School student Darcie Mead is bidding to qualify for the 2018 Winter Olympics in China

on the Olympics.

"I broke my hand in December, tore the ligaments and then re-tore them this year so I had surgery in July and the key now is getting fit again.

"It was disappointing to

miss the Winter Games, I think it came down to my age and experience, but there's another Games in four years and I'm going to train even harder to make sure I am there, build up the

experience and in the long run hopefully it'll pay off."

She added: "My goal for 2014 was to compete in the World Junior Championships and I did, so I achieved my main goal and I'm proud of that and look forward to moving on.

"I'm number one in Britain, but not the world so I've got to keep focused and keep training to get better and that keeps me motivated."

A potential stepping stone to China is next year's World Junior Championships – being held in Sochi – and being selected to compete has left her over the moon.

"It's very rewarding after all the injuries I had to overcome that it didn't affect me and to be recognised in my country as a strong athlete," she said.

"Hopefully I can compete at the World Junior Championships next year and use the next four years as a building block for the Olympics."